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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CCO-00
	CEA-01	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DEAE-00	DINT-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	WHA-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	OIGO-00	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	ITC-01	JUSE-00	LAB-01
	L-00	CAC-00	VCE-00	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NRRC-00
	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OES-00	OMB-01	DHS-00	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00
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P 271847Z MAR 03
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5340
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
CIA WASHDC
DIRONDCP WASHDC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BOGOTA 002764

BUENOS AIRES FOR MILT DRUCKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2013
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PTER, SNAR, EPET, EINV, MARR, PINR, CO
SUBJECT: SECURITY IN ARAUCA MAJOR POLITICAL TASK FOR URIBE

REF: A. BOGOTA 00025
B. BOGOTA 00364
C. BOGOTA 00757
D. 02 BOGOTA 7181

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON FOR REASONS: 1.5(B,D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ALVARO URIBE DECLARED THREE
OIL-RICH AND GUERRILLA-INFESTED MUNICIPALITIES IN ARAUCA A
"SPECIAL REHABILITATION ZONE" -- ONE OF JUST TWO SUCH ZONES

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 06 JUL 2004 200303455

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IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY. THE ZONES ARE CONSIDERED "PILOT PROJECTS" FOR HIS PLAN TO ESTABLISH "DEMOCRATIC SECURITY." THUS, A GREAT DEAL OF PRESIDENTIAL PRESTIGE HINGES ON SUCCESS IN ARAUCA.

DURING 2002

THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE (FISCALIA) AGGRESSIVELY APPREHENDED PIPELINE BOMBERS IN ARAUCA, DRAMATICALLY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PIPELINE INTERRUPTIONS AND REVENUE LOSSES. UNDER URIBE, COLAR PATROLS HAVE INCREASED, AND -- UNLIKE THE PRE-REHABILITATION ZONE PERIOD -- GUERRILLAS ARE BEING KILLED AND CAPTURED, BUT AT A HEAVY COST IN COLAR CASUALTIES.

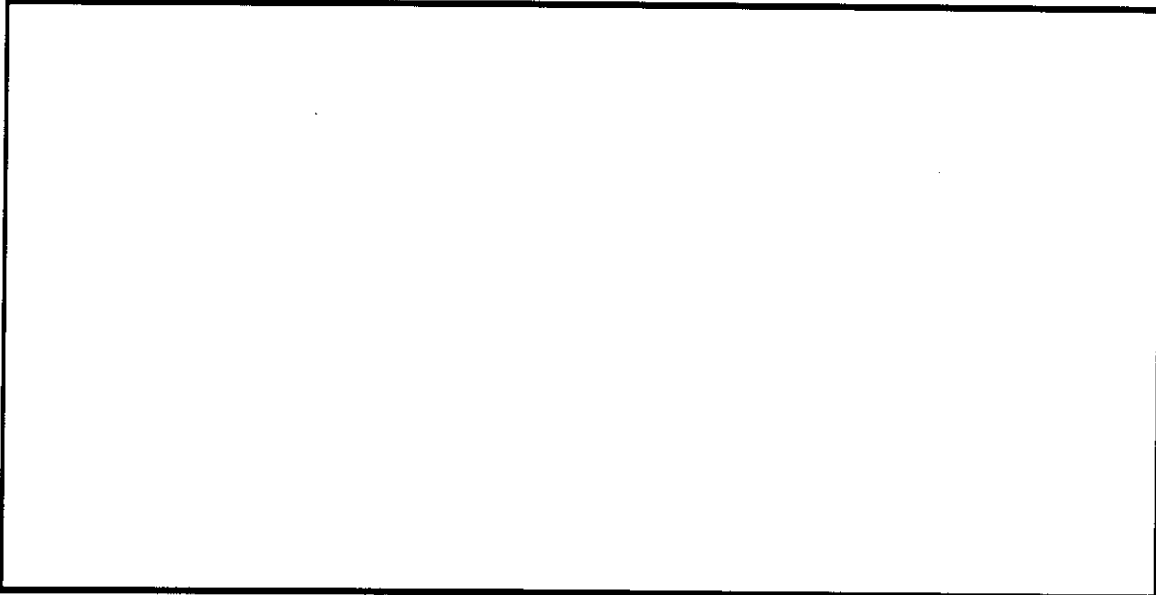
THE GUERRILLAS HAVE FOUGHT BACK HARD.

NUMEROUS CAR AND BICYCLE BOMBS HAVE EXPLODED. JOURNALISTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ASSASSINATED. ELECTRICAL TOWERS HAVE BEEN FELLED, AND A COSTLY "ARMED STRIKE" WAS IMPOSED BY THE ELN.

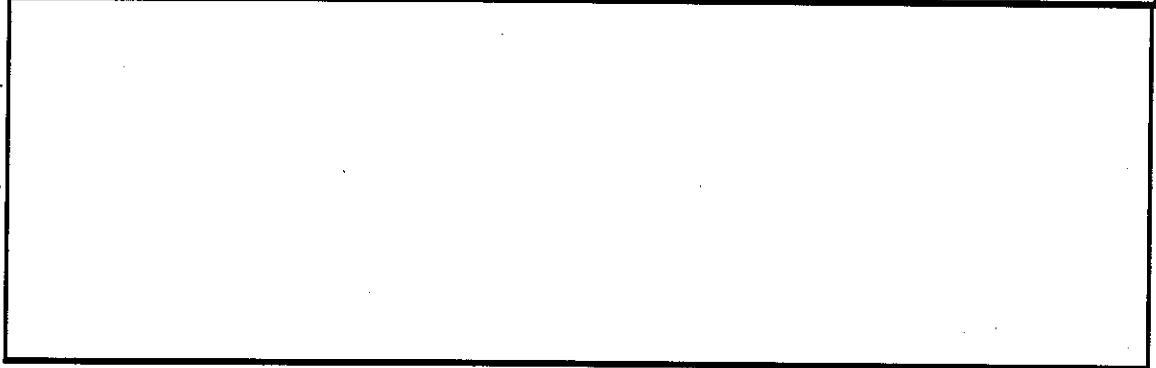

END SUMMARY.

2. (C) ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2002, PRESIDENT URIBE SET UP A "SPECIAL REHABILITATION ZONE" IN THE THREE MUNICIPALITIES OF ARAUCA DEPARTMENT THAT RECEIVE OIL ROYALTIES. THE ZONE INCLUDES THE CANO LIMON OILFIELD, WHERE U.S. OIL PRODUCER

OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM (OXY) AND STATE-OWNED ECOPETROL JOINTLY OPERATE 210 WELLS. A 770 KILOMETER PIPELINE, OF WHICH 178 KILOMETERS LIE IN ARAUCA, TRANSPORTS THE OIL TO MARKET. IN 2001, GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON THE PIPELINE -- PRIMARILY BY THE ELN -- SURGED TO 170. IN EARLY 2002 THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE (FISCALIA) INITIATED AN AGGRESSIVE INVESTIGATION OF INDIVIDUALS SUSPECTED OF REPEATEDLY BOMBING THE PIPELINE, WHICH HAS LED TO THE ARREST OF OVER SIXTY PERSONS. AS A RESULT, THE NUMBER OF PIPELINE ATTACKS DECLINED TO 41 IN 2002, AND THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY 6 ATTACKS TO DATE IN 2003.



3. (C) FARC OPERATIONS IN THE ZONE ALSO WERE BECOMING MORE AGGRESSIVE. FURTHERMORE, IN MID-2002 PARAMILITARIES BEGAN TO MOVE INTO THE REGION. BY PLACING ONE OF JUST TWO REHABILITATION ZONES IN ARAUCA, URIBE STAKED HIS CREDIBILITY ON BEING ABLE TO SHOW RESULTS THERE. LEADING NATIONAL NEWSPAPER EL TIEMPO RECENTLY STATED THAT, JUST AS FORMER PRESIDENT PASTRANA BURNED HIS POLITICAL GOODWILL ON THE PEACE PROCESS IN SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN, URIBE MAY EXHAUST HIS IN THE SEARCH FOR SECURITY IN ARAUCA.

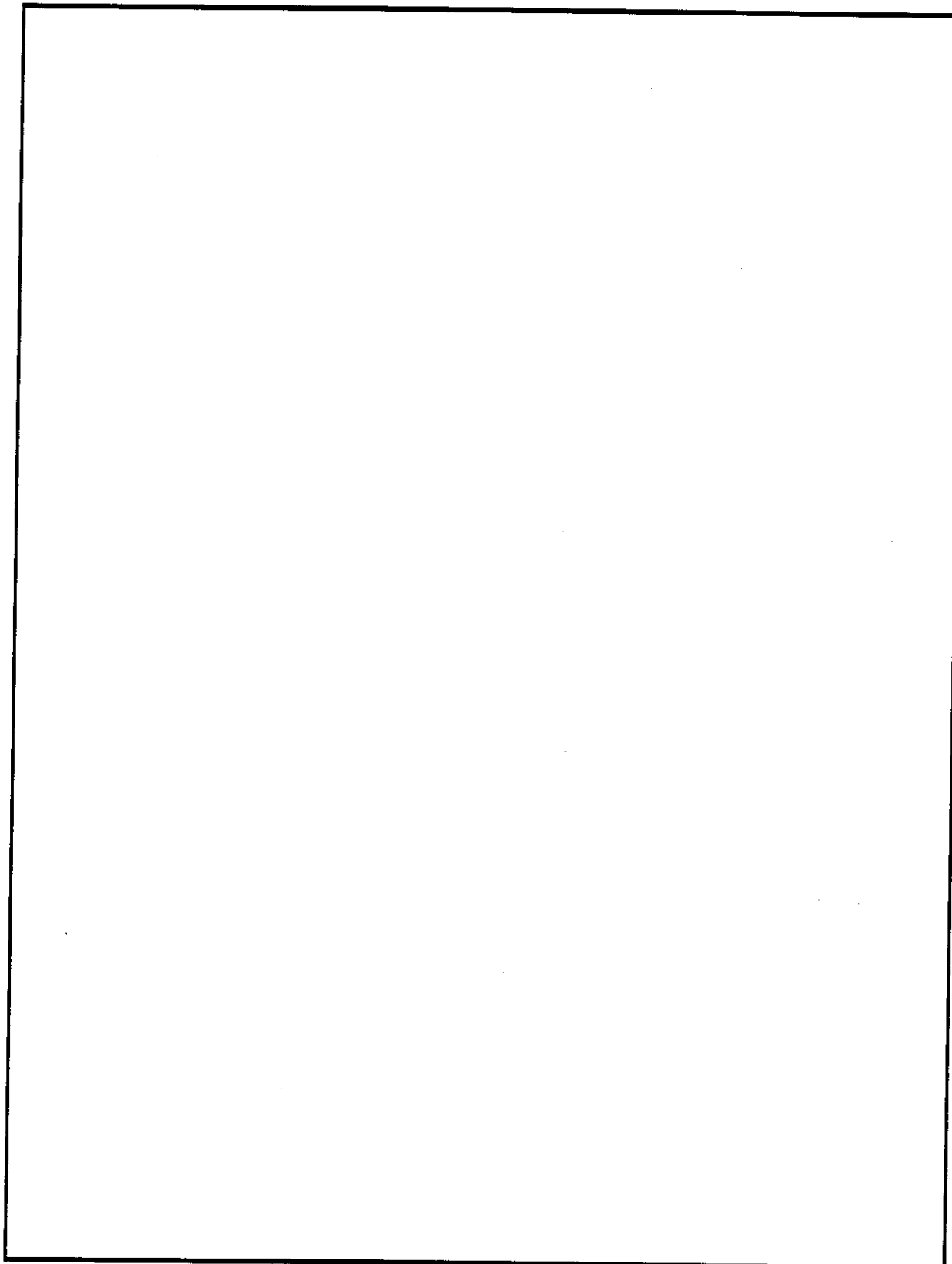


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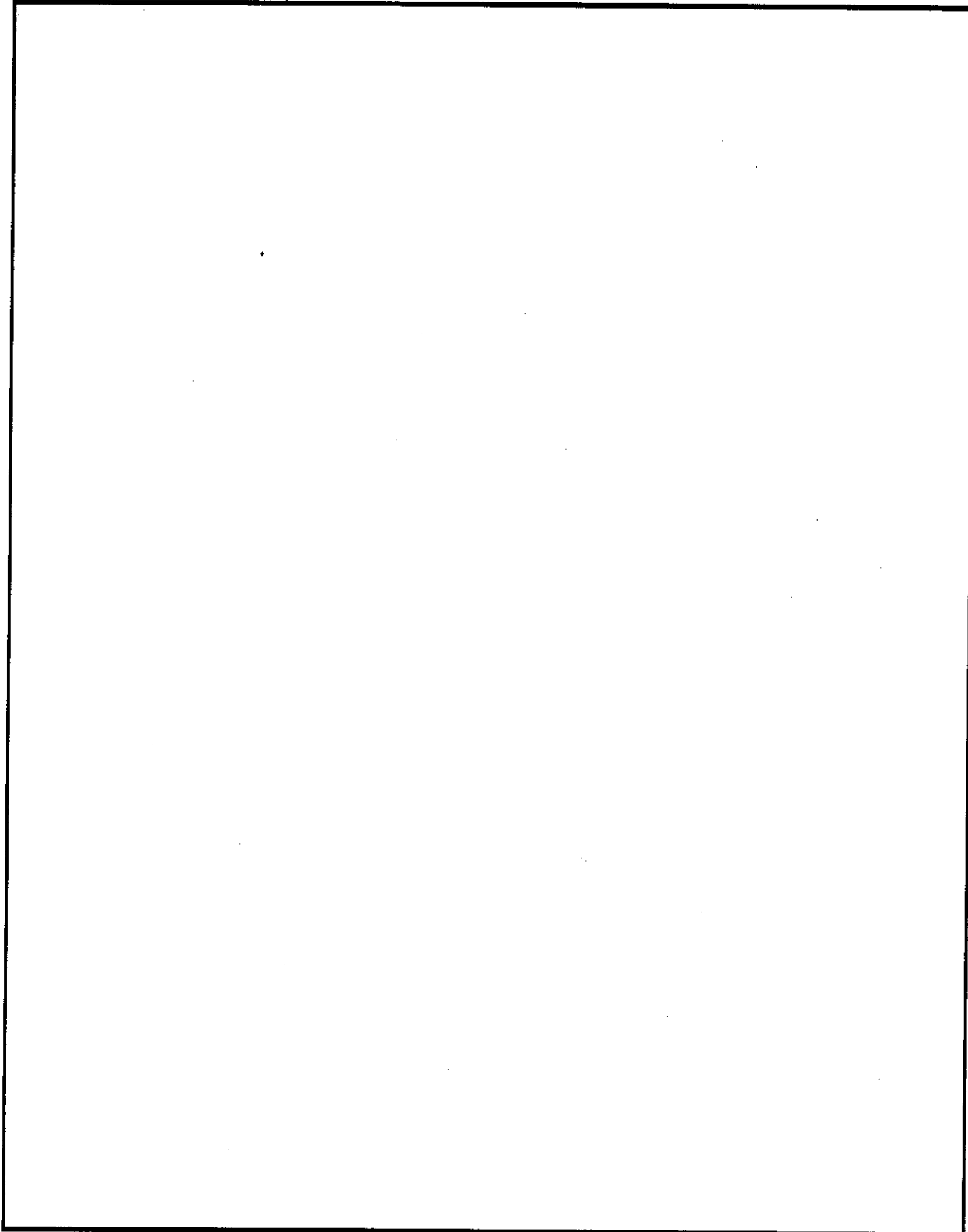
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AN EXPLOSION OF VIOLENCE

7. (C) ARAUCA WAS A HIGHLY VIOLENT PLACE BEFORE THE REHABILITATION ZONE WAS DECLARED. FOR EXAMPLE, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NOTED THAT ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2002, AN ICE CREAM TRUCK LOADED WITH SIX CYLINDER BOMBS EXPLODED IN SARAVENA, KILLING 36 PEOPLE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZONE, THE RHYTHM OF VIOLENCE IS PERCEIVED TO HAVE INCREASED AS THE GUERRILLAS HAVE RESPONDED TO INCREASED ACTIVITY BY THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES. FOR EXAMPLE:

-- ON DECEMBER 22, 2002 GUERRILLAS FORCED THE DRIVER OF A BUS CARRYING OXY WORKERS TO DRIVE TO THE EDGE OF A MINEFIELD, THEN BLEW THE BUS UP, KILLING THREE PERSONS.

-- NUMEROUS CAR BOMBS HAVE EXPLODED, INCLUDING FOUR IN JANUARY. IN SEVERAL CASES, DRIVERS OF THE CARS WERE EITHER UNAWARE OF THE EXPLOSIVES IN THE VEHICLE, OR HAD BEEN FORCED TO DRIVE THE CARS BY THREATS TO THEIR FAMILIES. SEVERAL BICYCLE BOMBS HAVE ALSO BEEN DEPLOYED.

-- MUNICIPAL MAYORS, CITY COUNCILMEN, AND DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ASSASSINATED.

-- FROM FEBRUARY 10-15, THE ELN DECLARED AN "ARMED STRIKE," FORCING CITIZENS TO STAY OFF THE ROADS AND BANNING ALL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY. REVENUES LOST BECAUSE OF THE "STRIKE" ARE ESTIMATED AT USD 1.75 MILLION.

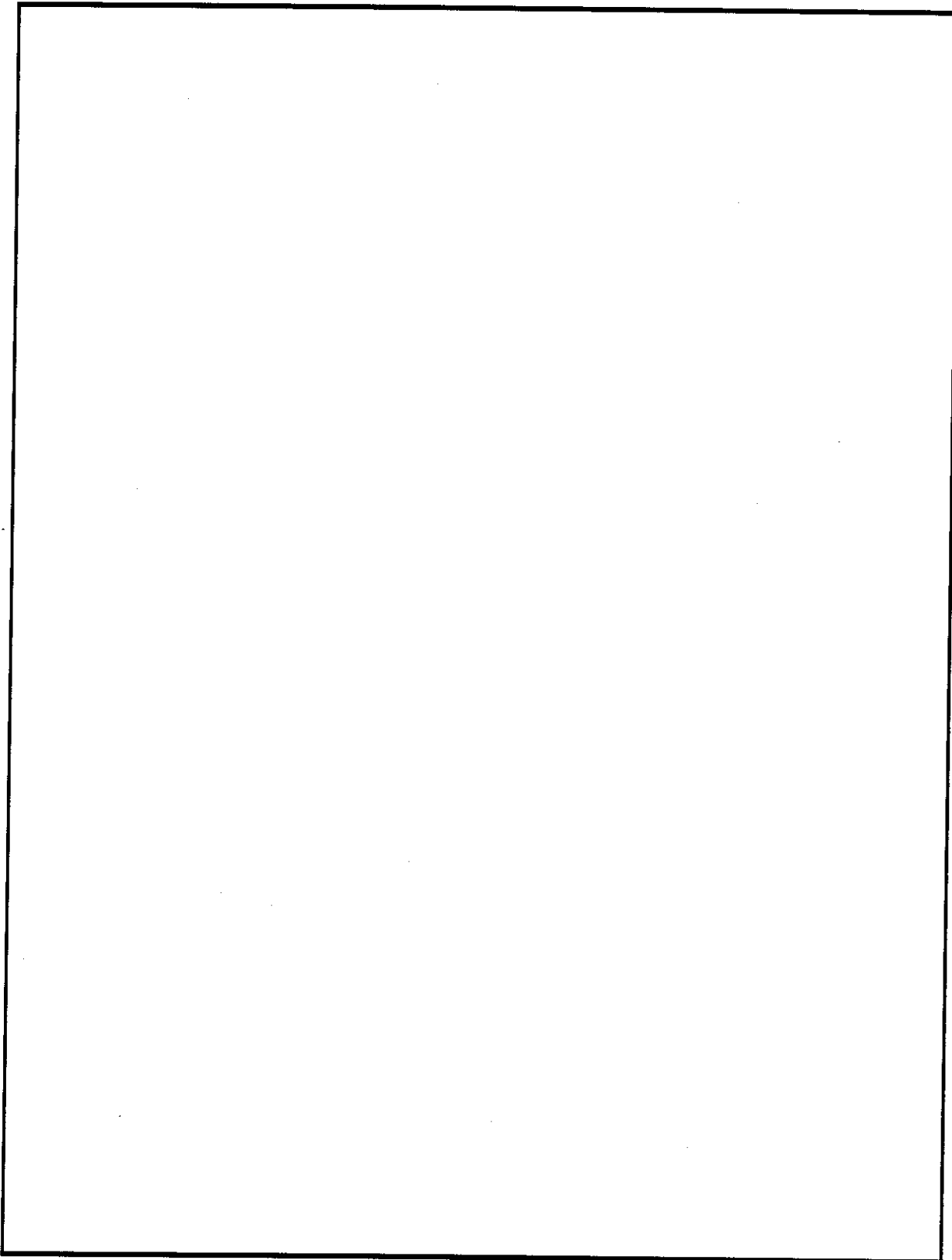
-- IN 2003, GUERRILLAS BLEW UP TWO ELECTRICAL TOWERS.

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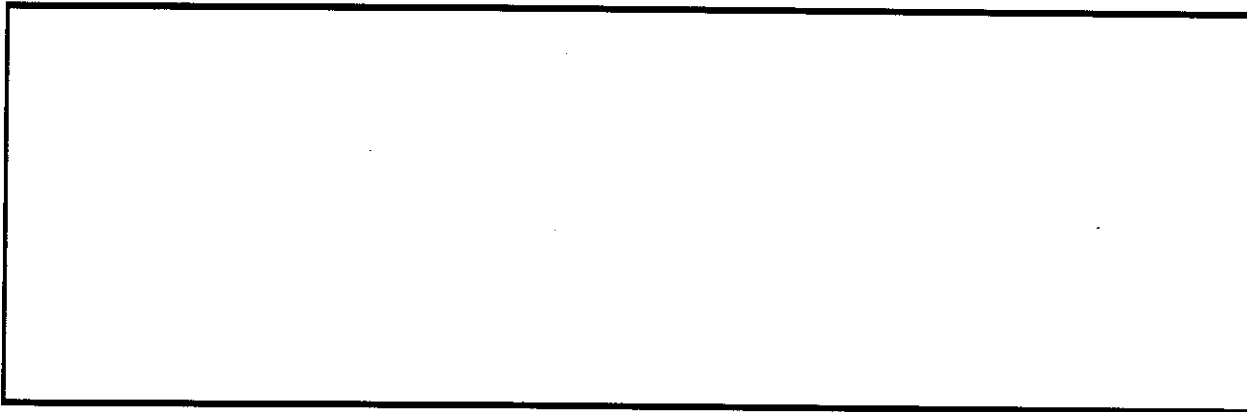
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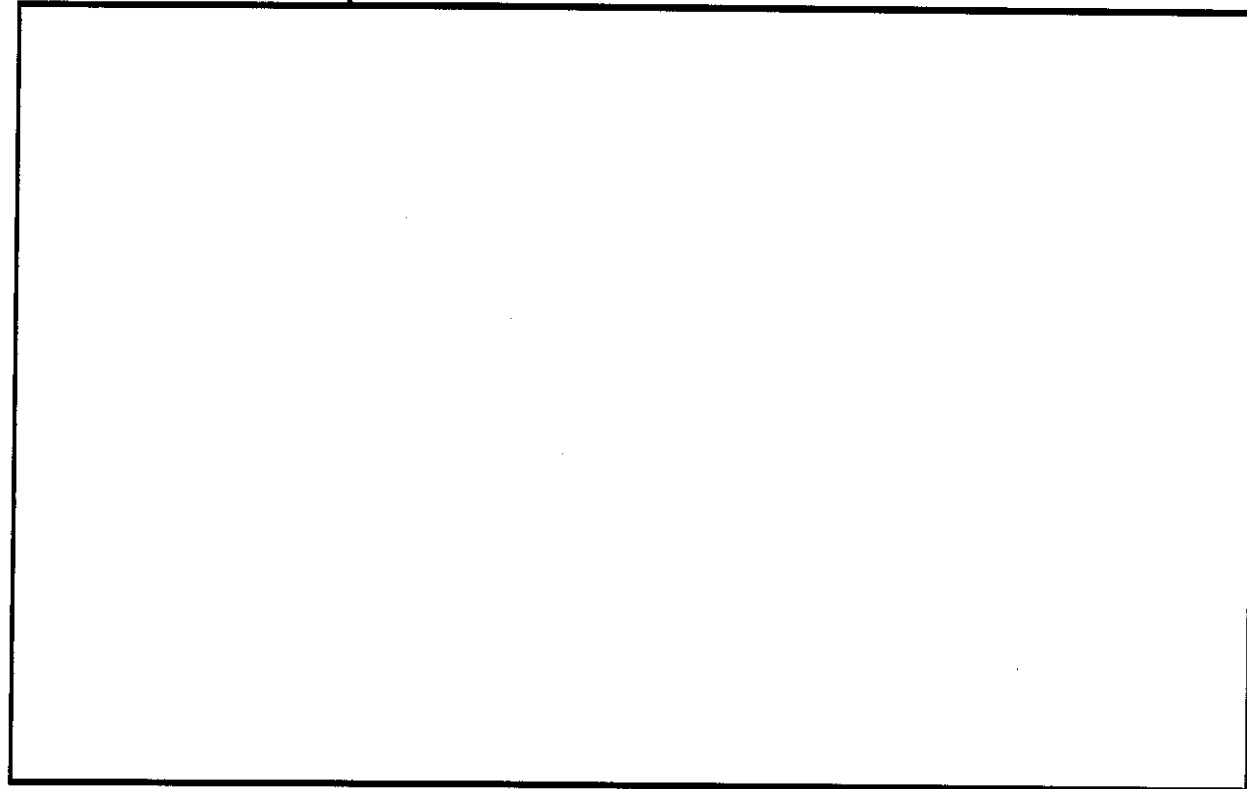
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LOOMING END OF STATE OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCE

13. (C) ON AUGUST 13, 2002, URIBE DECLARED A "STATE OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCE," WHICH ALLOWED HIM TO ISSUE DECREES WITH THE FORCE OF LAW (REF D). UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, A STATE OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCE CAN LAST A MAXIMUM OF 360 DAYS, AT WHICH TIME ALL DECREES ISSUED DURING THE STATE OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCE BECOME NULL AND VOID. THE REHABILITATION ZONES WERE ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SUCH A DECREE. A DECREE ISSUED BY URIBE ALSO ENHANCED THE POLICE POWERS OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES.



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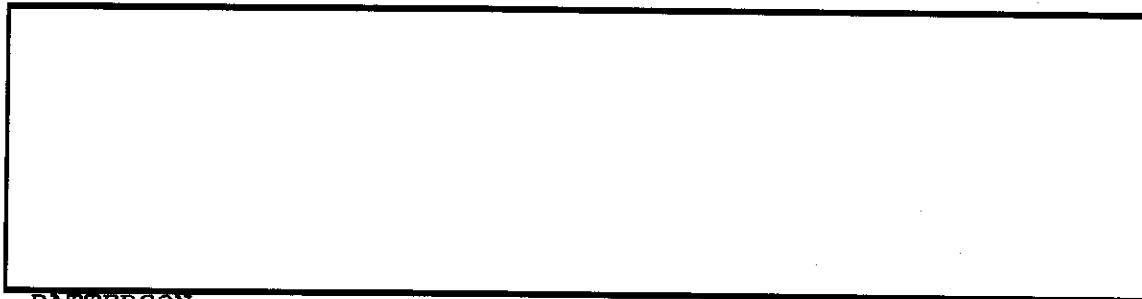
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